

From fashion to music to a magical Aruban reality



The art world both globally as locally has been devastated by the economic downfall of the current covid-19 pandemic reality. However our creatives are finding solutions and means of cooperatively still evoking a hopeful means to dream up an inspiring existence. Using online platforms effectively to still engage with their audience. If anything the time at home has allowed marvelous projects to brew into existence. One of these local projects that we are pleased to introduce today is called ANEMOIA, created by emerging artist Darwin Winklaar, who just graduated with honors from the Gerrit Rietveld Academy, Amsterdam.

Withholding the best dissertation from the department of fashion design. Darwin is a multidisciplinary artist. Working across disciplines and launching his musical debut under the artistic name "NIÑO DIVINO" which translates to "THE DIVINE CHILD", where he gives homage to his childhood memories especially being raised in Aruba's multicultural city San Nicolas.

Through the compilation of six songs from which four of them will be represented in music films he retells the story of his childhood memories and the domestic religious habits of the women who

raised him. ANEMOIA, represents nostalgia for a time you never knew. Acknowledging what happens behind closed doors; Aruba's domestic realm and working class situation, the influence of machismo in our culture and however detrimental that maybe the empowerment encountered by embodying the feminine energy through a more inclusive queer representation. Honoring these female entities and their folk religious mythologies, 'Niño Divino' comes to life through the magical lens of our folkloric religious heritage and our urban contemporary art scene. Especially through the cultural influences of San Nicolas as the district that raised him.

Darwin is very much inspired by his mother Violeta and tells us how he got inspired by her religious practices; "As an Aruban born and bred artist I always felt connected to the practice of romanticizing my childhood memories. Feeling the intense need to give an homage to the saint who I see and thus depict in the mother who raised me, namely Violeta.

Family, the domestic domain, and specifically the female entities and their religiosity, spiritual practices always enticed me. A vivid memory that shaped me was witnessing my mother performing her cathartic cleansing rituals while making her altars every Sunday, as part of her household duties. She did that to give homage to the saints, angels and deities that guide her and protect her; this is the heart of my project.

AMMONIA is a strong liquid, used to clean, sometimes, it can be so strong that it makes you lose sense of reality, pass out, an amnesia effect comes to be. The liquid ammonia is so strong that you have to mix it with different other liquids such as: Blouse, Florida water or even lemon. In most of the Aruban households they would use ammonia when they feel specific bad energy or curse around their house or in their home. Thus these hybrid practices of spirituality; doused in the Afro-religious and Catholic heritage as it exists plentifully in the Caribbean became a source of inspiration for me. I was mesmerized by these practices of faith that connected deeply with the emotions and hardships I witnessed as a child. It became a female centered way of manifesting power and enabling a constant state of forgiveness.

My mother is the main reason behind me venturing upon a fashion career at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy. Delving and experimenting with unconventional materials, while always feeling the need to constantly innovate and thus bring into life: The Aruban Couture.

From there on fashion was an outlet for me. It allowed me to bring to life this persona that honors the creative Aruban identity which I call 'Niño Divino'. He lives in the magical realm where music, singing and performance meets a multi-disciplinary existence. Celebrating and thus bringing into existence a new contemporary genre which I refer to 'Folkloric Religion or NEO-Folklore'.

Niño Divino, performs and thus sings and dances in-between nostalgia and melancholia. For the past years I've been walking by foot cultivating as much information possible of my heritage in order to present my new up and coming projects.

I am challenging myself as an artist by pioneering a new genre and expanding my expertise outside of the fashion design field into the multi-disciplinary. I will present this in my first EP, that debuts me as an artist/conceptual designer and musician that is creating this neo-folklore reality. The project is called "ANEMOIA".

San Nicolas is the epicenter of industrial progress which has offered us a melting pot of cultural influences. By embodying all of these influences and translating it into a new reality. Darwin is honoring the very essence of our Caribbean heritage.

Darwin is also one of the finalist of Lichting 2020. Lichting is the beating heart of Amsterdam Fashion Week. The concept of 'Lichting' is simple: the best academy graduates of one year in one central catwalk show. In the audience are the 700 most important people for the next step in their careers: fashion journalists and influential stylists, ready to spot the next big thing; CEO's and design managers on the look-out for talent; and the all-important players-behind-the-scenes, all eager to see what the nation's academies have brought forth this year.

Support this beautiful project that gives a whole new artistic dimension of Aruba by donating at Darwin's GoFundme campaign: <https://gofund.me/f22d0f38>

More information on this you will find on Youtube: <https://youtu.be/P3-QEDgqQ8M>.

